AVENGERS THE INITIATIVE

AFTER STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT WAS DESTROYED DURING A TELEVISED FIGHT BETWEEN THE NEW WARRIORS AND A GROUP OF DANGEROUS VILLAINS, A FEDERAL SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT WAS PASSED. ALL INDIVIDUALS POSSESSING PARANORMAL ABILITIES MUST NOW REGISTER WITH THE GOVERNMENT. DISAGREEMENT OVER THE ACT SPLIT THE SUPERHUMAN COMMUNITY IN TWO, WITH TONY STARK--IRON MAN--AS THE FIGUREHEAD FOR THE PRO-REGISTRATION MOVEMENT AND CAPTAIN AMERICA LEADING THE ANTI-REGISTRATION RESISTANCE. NOW, WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA'S SURRENDER AND ASSASSINATION, THE SUPERHUMAN CIVIL WAR IS OVER. TONY STARK HAS BEEN APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF S.H.I.E.L.D., THE INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCE. HE HAS SET INTO MOTION **THE INITIATIVE,** A PLAN FOR TRAINING AND POLICING SUPER HEROES IN THIS BRAVE NEW WORLD, INTENDED TO POSITION A LOCAL SUPER HERO TEAM IN EACH OF AMERICA'S FIFTY STATES.

To find Marvel Comics at a local comic shop, call 1-888-COMICBOOK.

AVENGERS: THE INITIATIVE No. 1, June, 2007. Published Monthly by MARVEL PUBLISHING, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016. © 2007 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. $2.99 per copy in the U.S. and $3.75 in Canada (GST #R127032852) in the direct market and $2.99 per copy in the U.S. and $4.25 in Canada (GST #R127032852) through the newsstand. Canadian Agreement #40668537. **Printed in the USA.** ALAN FINE, CEO Marvel Toys & Publishing Divisions and CMO Marvel Entertainment, Inc.; DAVID GABRIEL, Senior VP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; DAVID BOGART, VP of Business affairs & Editorial Operations; MICHAEL PASCIULLO, VP Merchandising & Communications; JIM BOYLE, VP of Publishing Operations; DAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; JUSTIN F. GABRIE, Managing Editor; SUSAN CRESPI, Production Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Joe Maimone, Advertising Director, at jmaimone@marvel.com or 212-576-8534. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-217-9158.

THE GAUNTLET
Baghdad, Iraq.
DESERT EAGLE TO CONVOY. STATUS OF "CARROT TOP"?
"CARROT TOP" IS SECURE, SIR. WE'RE TEN MINUTES OUT TO BASE AND ALL'S CLEAR. NO SIGN OF--
HOLD UP!
WE HAVE A CONTACT! I REPEAT! WE HAVE A CONTACT!
VEHICLE HEADING THIS WAY!
<PULL OVER!>
<STOP OR WE'LL FIRE!>
SON OF A @#%*! THEY'RE SPEEDING UP!
IT'S AN I.E.D.!
LIGHT IT UP!
SKSKSKT
PKA-PKA-PKA
<HAIL HYDRA! CUT OFF A LIMB, TWO MORE WILL TAKE ITS PLACE!>
TOM
TOM
TOM

SIR? ARE YOU OKAY IN THERE?
SECRETARY GYRICH?
I'M FINE, SERGEANT, EXCEPT FOR A MILD CASE OF NAUSEA.
"I'VE GOT IT WELL IN HAND." YOU ACTUALLY COME UP WITH THAT CRAP?
NO, SIR. A PETTY OFFICER FROM PUBLIC AFFAIRS. HE WRITES FIVE A' THOSE A DAY.
GOOD. I ALMOST CHANGED MY MIND ABOUT YOU.
I WISH YOU WOULD, MR. SECRETARY.
I THINK THIS PROVES MY POINT, SIR. I'M NOT NEEDED STATESIDE. I'M NEEDED HERE.
NO, YOU'RE NOT, SOLDIER. NOT SINCE M-DAY.
WHAT? WHEN ALL THOSE MUTANTS LOST THEIR POWERS? WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH THE MIDDLE EAST?
EVERYTHING. BEFORE M-DAY, MUTANTS WERE THE GREAT EQUALIZER, SPREAD OUT ACROSS THE GLOBE.
THEN ONE DAY, POOF, LIKE MAGIC, NEARLY EVERY HOMO SUPERIOR ON EARTH LOST THEIR MUTANT ABILITIES.
NOW ALL THAT'S LEFT ARE THE "HAPPY ACCIDENTS". PEOPLE WHO GOT SUPER-POWERS THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY...
...COSMIC RAYS, MAGIC CANES, RADIOACTIVE SPIDER BITES.
THE WAY GOD INTENDED.
AND GUESS WHO LEADS THE WORLD IN LAB ACCIDENTS, TIME WARPS, AND ALIEN CRASH SITES?
AMERICA.
WITHOUT DOING A THING, WE WON THE SUPER-POWERS RACE. WE HAVE AN ARMY OF SUPER HEROES. WITH YOUR TRAINING THEY COULD BE A SUPER HERO ARMY.
SO ASK YOURSELF, SERGEANT, HOW WOULD YOU RATHER FIGHT THIS WAR? WITH MORE BOOTS ON THE GROUND...

MVP
Liberty, Kentucky.
YES, MR. VAN PATRICK. I KNOW ALL ABOUT THE SCANDAL. HOW YOUR SON LOST HIS SCHOLARSHIP...
...ONCE THE PRESS REVEALED THAT HIS GREAT-GRANDFATHER WAS DR. ABRAHAM ERSKINE...
...THE MAN WHO CREATED THE SUPER-SOLDIER SERUM BACK IN WORLD WAR 2.
IT'S A LOAD OF BULL!

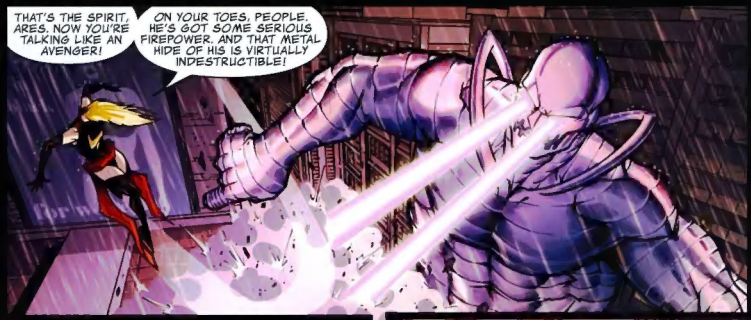
DAD, PLEASE...
QUIET, MICHAEL. THEY DID TEST AFTER TEST ON MY BOY. AND THEY ALL CAME UP NEGATIVE FOR ANY FOREIGN SUBSTANCES.
AND THEY'RE STILL KICKING HIM OUT! NOW THERE'S TALK ABOUT MAKING HIM GIVE ALL HIS MEDALS BACK.
I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT. BUT THAT'S WHY I'M HERE, SIR.

YOU SEE, I KNOW A PLACE WHERE MICHAEL CAN USE HIS GIFTS. A PLACE THAT CAN HELP HIM BE A HERO AGAIN.
SCRATCH THAT. A SUPER HERO.

WHAT? YOU THINK THAT'LL MAKE THINGS BETTER? I'M SORRY, MR. ASTROVIK...
...BUT EVER SINCE YOUR OLD TEAMMATES, THE NEW WARRIORS, BLEW UP STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT...
...MOST PEOPLE THINK YOU SUPER-TYPES DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD.

THE INITIATIVE IS GOING TO CHANGE ALL OF THAT. IT'S A NEW DAY, MICHAEL. A NEW STAMFORD.
AND MAYBE A NEW START FOR YOU TOO. TRUST ME, THIS IS GONNA BE HUGE!

WHOA! I ALWAYS FORGET HOW BIG ULTIMO LOOKS...
WASP, TO YOU EVERY AVENGERS VILLAIN LOOKS BIG.
WELL, IN THIS CASE, CAROL, SHE'S RIGHT!
FINALLY! A FOE WORTHY OF THE GOD OF WAR!
ARMORY
San Francisco, California.


THAT'S THE SPIRIT, ARES. NOW YOU'RE TALKING LIKE AN AVENGER!
ON YOUR TOES, PEOPLE. HE'S GOT SOME SERIOUS FIREPOWER, AND THAT METAL HIDE OF HIS IS VIRTUALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE!

RRRZZZZ
CHOOOOM

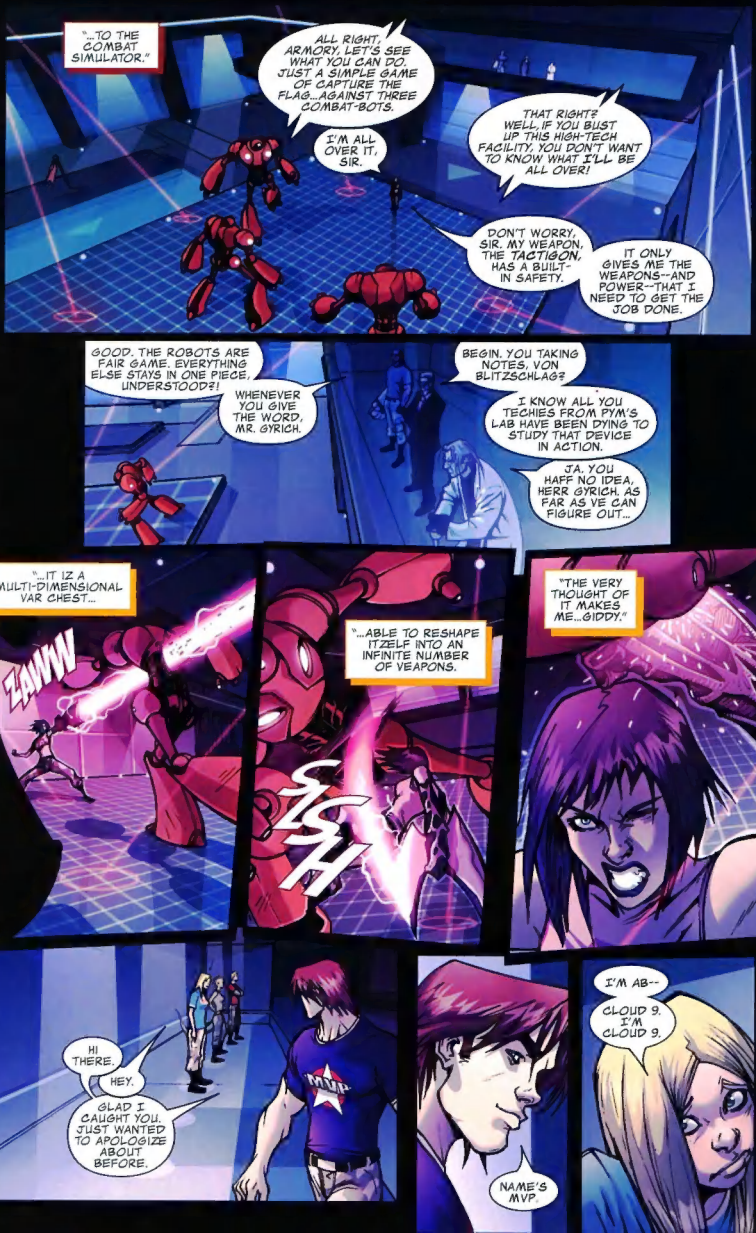
FWAMM
WHAT IN HADES?! WONDER MAN, DID YOU...?
DON'T LOOK AT ME, ARES. I DIDN'T DO A THING.

YEAH. THAT'D BE ME.
SIMON, DO YOU KNOW WHO THAT IS?
NOT A CLUE.
THE NAME'S ARMORY.
SO, MIGHTY AVENGERS, HUH? WHERE DO I SIGN UP?
CAMP HAMMOND, INITIATIVE HQ
Stamford, Connecticut.
CONFIRMED. IT'S THE NEXT BUSLOAD OF NEW RECRUITS. LET 'EM THROUGH.
KEEP A TIGHT WATCH ON THE CROWD. THEY'RE A LITTLE PUNCHY TODAY.
ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR! NOT ANOTHER CIVIL WAR!
FIVE, SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT! TAKE YOUR BASE OUT OF OUR STATE!
CATCHY. IT'S GOT A BEAT AND YOU CAN DANCE TO IT.
SLAPSTICK, SIT DOWN. THOSE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN THROUGH ENOUGH.
LAST THING THEY NEED IS YOU MAKING FACES AT 'EM.
HEY, PRINCESS. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
IT'S THOR GIRL. AND I'M A GODDESS.
TOTALLY. IF I SEE IRON MAN, I'LL GET YOU AN AUTOGRAPH.

QUIET DOWN! ALL OF YOU! FOUNDING AVENGER ON DECK!
ATTEN-SHUN! THEY'RE ALL YOURS, DR. PYM.
WELCOME TO THE INITIATIVE. I'M HERE TO TELL YOU THAT WHEN YOU STEP ON TO THIS BASE, YOU WILL BE STANDING ON HALLOWED GROUND.
ON THIS SITE A GROUP OF YOUNG, POWERFUL SUPERHUMANS, MUCH LIKE YOURSELVES, RUSHED INTO BATTLE.
THEY WENT IN WITHOUT A PLAN, WITHOUT PROPER TRAINING, AND WITH PLENTY OF ATTITUDE.
AND MOST OF THEM DIED. ALONG WITH OVER 600 MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN.
THAT'S ONE WAY OF LOOKIN' AT IT...
WE ARE HERE TO ENSURE THAT A MOMENT LIKE THAT NEVER HAPPENS AGAIN.
HERE AT CAMP HAMMOND, YOU WILL BE PUT THROUGH AVENGERS BASIC TRAINING. THIS INCLUDES COMBAT, FIRST AID, AND SUPERHUMAN ETHICS.
ONCE YOU PASS, YOUR REGISTRATION CARD WILL BE UPGRADED TO A FULL HERO'S LICENSE, AND IF YOU'RE AMONG THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST...
...YOU'LL BE OFFERED A SPOT ON ONE OF OUR FIFTY NATIONWIDE TEAMS. DO THAT, AND YOU'VE MADE IT TO "THE SHOW."
UM, SIR...
WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T PASS?
OUT OF THE BUS AND FALL IN.
YOUR DRILL INSTRUCTOR WILL TAKE THINGS FROM HERE.

ALL RIGHT, FREAKS, LISTEN UP! I'M THE GAUNTLET, AND I AM HERE FOR ONE REASON AND ONE REASON ONLY: TO SEE TO IT THAT EVEN THOUGH YOU CAME HERE AS WORTHLESS, BRAIN-DEAD NEW WARRIORS...
...THAT YOU FLY OUTTA HERE AS CLASS 100 CAPE-WEARIN' AVENGERS!
YOU THINK YOUR POWERS MAKE YOU "SPECIAL"? WELL, GUESS WHAT, LADIES...I DON'T CARE IF YOU SHOOT LASERS OUTTA YOUR EYES OR LIGHTNING OUTTA YOUR @#%*! THE ONLY POWER THAT MATTERS HERE...
...IS YOUR SUPER-ABILITY TO DO EVERY MOTHER-LOVING THING I SAY! IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?!
I SAID, IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?!!
SIR, YES, SIR!

"...AND SEE FOR YOURSELF!"
MAN, LOOK AT HIM MOVE!
HASN'T SLIPPED UP ONCE.
FLAWLESS!
GO, KID!
MAKES IT LOOK SO EASY!
CHECK OUT HIS TIME!
GOING FOR THE COURSE RECORD!
SHH! DON'T JINX HIM!
ALMOST THERE!
C'MON, KID! YOU CAN DO IT!
FIRST TIME THROUGH, AND YOU BROKE THE CAMP RECORD FOR NON-SPEEDSTERS.
COLOR ME IMPRESSED!
THANKS, MA'AM.
GOOD WORK, KID. HIT THE SHOWERS.


"...TO THE COMBAT SIMULATOR."
ALL RIGHT, ARMORY, LET'S SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO. JUST A SIMPLE GAME OF CAPTURE THE FLAG...AGAINST THREE COMBAT-BOTS.
I'M ALL OVER IT, SIR.
THAT RIGHT? WELL, IF YOU BUST UP THIS HIGH-TECH FACILITY, YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHAT I'LL BE ALL OVER!
DON'T WORRY, SIR. MY WEAPON, THE TACTIGON, HAS A BUILT-IN SAFETY.
IT ONLY GIVES ME THE WEAPONS--AND POWER--THAT I NEED TO GET THE JOB DONE.
GOOD. THE ROBOTS ARE FAIR GAME. EVERYTHING ELSE STAYS IN ONE PIECE, UNDERSTOOD?!
WHENEVER YOU GIVE THE WORD, MR. GYRICH.
BEGIN. YOU TAKING NOTES, VON BLITZSCHLAG?
I KNOW ALL YOU TECHIES FROM PYM'S LAB HAVE BEEN DYING TO STUDY THAT DEVICE IN ACTION.
JA. YOU HAFF NO IDEA, HERR GYRICH. AS FAR AS VE CAN FIGURE OUT...
"...IT IZ A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL VAR CHEST...
ZAWW
"...ABLE TO RESHAPE ITZELF INTO AN INFINITE NUMBER OF VEAPONS.
SLASH
"THE VERY THOUGHT OF IT MAKES ME...GIDDY."
HI THERE.
HEY.
GLAD I CAUGHT YOU. JUST WANTED TO APOLOGIZE ABOUT BEFORE.
NAME'S MVP.
I'M AB--
CLOUD 9. I'M CLOUD 9.

I CAN FEEL IT.
INSIDE YOU.
I KNOW.
KNOW WHAT YOU'RE AFRAID OF.
YOU'RE AN ARACHNOPHOBE.
SPIDERS.
YOU'RE DEATHLY AFRAID OF SPIDERS.
AAARHH
ZZKKK
GET IT AWAY!
HEY!